

REMARKS

Claims 16-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 3-14 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claims 1 and 4 for various informalities therein. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 4 are canceled by this Amendment, and the objection to these claims is therefore moot.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3-7, 10, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 6,200,485 to Kitaevich et al. in view of European Patent Application 0993803 A1 to Narimatsu et al. While Applicant does not necessarily agree with this rejection, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 3-7, 10, 13 and 14 have been canceled by this Amendment. Therefore, the rejection of these claims under §103 is moot.

The Office Action rejects claims 4, 5 and 10 under U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,370,123 to Shinzato in view of European Patent Application 0993803 A1 to Narimatsu et al. While Applicant does not necessarily agree with this rejection, it is respectfully submitted that claims 4, 5 and 10 have been canceled by this Amendment. Therefore, the rejection of these claims under §103 is moot.

The Office Action rejects claims 4, 5 and 10 under U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 4,718,891 to Lipps. While Applicant does not necessarily agree with this rejection, it is respectfully submitted that claims 4, 5 and 10 have been canceled by this Amendment. Therefore, the rejection of these claims under §103 is moot.

The Office Action objects to claims 8, 9, 11 and 12 as being dependent on a rejected base claim. The Office Action also objects to claims 16-19 as being substantial duplicates of claims 9, 8, 12 and 11, respectively. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 8, 9, 11 and 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 8, 9, 11 and 12 have been canceled by this Amendment and that claims 16-19, being substantial duplicates of claims 9, 8, 12 and 11, are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 16-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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